





Umeå  
Ministerial

Barents Euro-Arctic Council

# Umeå Declaration

The Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Union **participated** together with representatives of the Barents Regional Council, indigenous peoples, regional bodies, observer states and invited guests in the XVII Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) under the Chairmanship of Sweden in Umeå on 3 October 2019.

The Council **highlighted** the significant role of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation as a platform for strengthening mutual trust and stability, **respecting** human rights, democratic values and gender equality and **promoting** sustainable development in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. The Council **underlined** that the cooperation has a potential to act as an example of successful practical regional cooperation in a rapidly changing world.

The Council **stressed** that the close interaction between national, regional and local levels together with people-to-people contacts, in which indigenous peoples play an important part, are all key elements of the Barents cooperation.

The Council **emphasized** the important human, social, environmental and economic capital of the Barents region and the remarkable development of the region since the founding of the cooperation in 1993 and **underlined** the need to continue working together to increase prosperity and connectivity.

The Council **recognized** the significant role of the Barents Regional Council (BRC) and noted its regional programme 2019-2023. The Council **acknowledged** the importance of the parliamentary dimension and took note of the 9<sup>th</sup> Barents Parliamentary Conference held in Haparanda, Sweden in 2019.

The Council stressed the important role of the indigenous peoples, reaffirmed its commitment to respect their rights as set out in the UNDRIP and **took note** of the IV Barents Indigenous Peoples Congress and II Barents Indigenous Peoples Summit, held in Lycksele, Sweden in 2019.

The Council **recognized** the achievements in areas of economic cooperation, environment, health, emergency and rescue, tourism, forest sector, education and research, and cultural exchange, **underlined** the importance of the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation and sustainable and efficient cross-border transport and welcomed the final draft Joint Barents Transport Plan.

The Council **acknowledged** the important work to increase youth engagement in all areas of cooperation, **endorsed** the youth recommendations and requested the BEAC to further **monitor progress** and **implement** activities in all areas of cooperation.

The Council **underlined** that climate change and its consequences need to be **resolutely** addressed, **affirmed** its commitment to implement the Paris Agreement and **emphasised** the need for ambitious concerted action in this regard, as recalled by the latest scientific research.

The Council **noted** with concern that the Barents region is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average, which will severely affect the ecosystems, societies and communities, including the livelihood of indigenous peoples, **stressed** the need for all the Working Groups to continue implement the Barents Action Plan on Climate Change and **encouraged** further activities in the area.

The Council further **welcomed** progress in reducing the number of Barents environmental "hot spots" and **called for** enhanced environmental performance and strengthened remediation efforts with the aim of eliminating the remaining ones.

The Council **emphasized** the importance of raising further awareness and visibility of the Barents cooperation, and **stressed** the need to increase focus on synergies between multilateral cooperation formats in the North.

**Looking ahead**, the Council **underlined** its commitment to ensuring that political dialogue, practical cooperation and people-to-people contacts remain the cornerstone of the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation and **stressed** the importance of the BEAC remaining a vehicle for building mutual trust, understanding and good neighbouring relations.

The Council **expressed its gratitude** to the BEAC chair Sweden and the BRC chair Finnmark, Norway for their successful chairmanships.

The Council **welcomed** the incoming BEAC chair, Norway and the BRC chair Västerbotten, Sweden, and **encouraged** them to continue developing the cooperation through tangible results.

